

# Three poems by Gustaf Fröding

A onetime minister in the Swedenborgian Church, Albert Björck (1856-1938) lived for a time in the United States and was a founder of the publishing house Björck & Börjesson. His Fröding translations were published in 1903. On the inside cover were the words, "One hundred copies printed on this paper for distribution in Sweden." He gave a copy of the book to the poet and inscribed it, *Gustaf Fröding tillgifnast från Albert Björck* (To Gustaf Fröding affectionately from Albert Björck).

*Poems by Gustaf Fröding*, trans. by Albert Björck, (Stockholm: Björck och Börjesson, 1903), 30 pp.

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## King Erik's song to Carin

(When she had been dancing before him.)

*En visa till Karin när hon hade dansat*

Of noble flowers will I bind  
a wreath around my loved one's hair;  
a wreath of memory's roses twined  
for thee in older days to wear.

And with my hands I will it sling  
around my loved one's head so dear;  
around thy gray hairs shall it cling  
in times when I'm no longer here.

So lithe and graceful does she glide  
my well beloved, but is not gay  
— so in my wreath a thorn does hide  
and wounds, brings sorrow and dismay.

A blood-drop falls from thorn in wreath,  
on my beloved's head a stain  
— so is in all I give beneath  
the gift a curse; my wreath brings pain.

Gustaf Fröding *Splashes and spray* 1896

Translation: Albert Björck 1903

# A song to Carin from King Erik in the prison

*En visa till Karin ur fångelset*

Mete me not with measures,  
guage me not with tools.  
A fool I'm grown,  
a fool among fools.

Vast and beautiful realms  
and a people sincere  
made me great as king,  
I was emperors' peer.

A wreck is my kingdom  
and shattered my throne,  
in the dark, cruel prison  
for my crimes I atone.

Friends I had and kinsmen  
who defended my lands;  
the blood of friends and kinsmen  
now sullies my hands.

For my crown and my honour  
my people fought well;  
in reward for their faith  
they in misery dwell.

Daughters of my people,  
beautiful and chaste,  
I sent from my castle  
ravished and disgraced.

Last I reached for thee  
to be my latest cheer  
sacking life of spring  
to give the dying year.

Many bitter tears o'er me  
thou hast spilt,  
mete me not with measures,  
forgive me my guilt.

Gustaf Fröding *Splashes and spray* 1896  
Translation: Albert Björck 1903

# The dreamer of dreams

*Si drömmaren kommer där*

The dreamer of dreams comes there  
With head bowed down and thoughtful air.

On lonely paths he delights to walk  
that take him away from us and our talk.

For him the Sun bows down, in his dreams,  
and stars and moon — the dreams blasphemes.

He is our father's dearest son  
come, let us slay him, come on!

Gustaf Fröding *Splashes and spray* 1896  
Translation: Albert Björck 1903